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A wild shot Pintail × Mallard hybrid

by M. A. Macdonald & J. E. Newby

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On 16th December 1970 A. MacAuslane shot a strange duck from a flight of Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos* Linnaeus), at Newmachar, Aberdeenshire, Scotland. It was a typical male hybrid, broadly intermediate in plumage and build between a Mallard and a Pintail (*Anas acuta* Linnaeus). It was compared with skins at the Zoology Department, University of Aberdeen, where it is now preserved as a study skin (no. 1971.1.2). A detailed description was taken and follows below. P denotes a Pintail character; M a Mallard one; and PM a Pintail character modified in the direction of Mallard.

Size and shape: The long neck and narrow pointed wings were like those of Pintail (P), but in size it approached Mallard (M).

Head: Forehead and crown feathers glossy green (M), broadly tipped chocolate brown (P); nape glossy green at sides to black in centre (M); cheeks and throat dull dark green (M); white collar on front and sides of neck broader than in Mallard (MP), and produced up side of neck in an indistinct white line (P); no trace of bimaculation, a characteristic often found in hybrids involving Pintail and Mallard (Harrison & Harrison 1971).

Bill: In shape and colour like Pintail; main colour slate grey; nail, base and margin of upper mandible, and band along ridge of culmen, black; lower mandible black with a narrow grey subterminal band (P).

Breast: Upper breast pale chestnut with creamy tips (MP); lower white (P); sides strongly vermiculated grey and black.

Belly: Finely vermiculated grey and black, stronger on flanks (M).

Under tail coverts: Glossy black, bounded anteriorly by a broad white band (M).

Tail: 18 feathers (M); outer seven pairs grey with mottled creamy edges, decreasing in width inwards; eighth darker with a very thin creamy outer margin; centre pair glossy black, long and pointed (P), and slightly upcurved (M).

Upper tail coverts: Dark brown with pale edgings.

Rump: Olive brown with paler edges.

Back: Vermiculated brown-grey and black (PM).
Scapulars: Vermiculated and tinged with buff; outer edge of feathers black.
Wings: Upper coverts olive with dark shafts; primary coverts and alula grey-brown; primaries grey-brown, paler on inner webs; speculum green with a purple sheen (PM); black proximally (P); leading edge formed by chestnut tips of greater coverts (P); broad white trailing edge; tertials brown-grey; axillaries white; wing linings creamy.

Legs and feet: Pale yellow with grey webs.

Measurements: Wing (min.) 274 mm.; bill (from feathers) 57, (depth at nares) 19, (width at nares) 22 mm; tail (total) 110, (centre/outer) 54, (centre/next) 5 mm; tarsus 120 mm.

Discussion: The above description shows that all the characters of the hybrid can be ascribed to males of the two parent species, with perhaps more Pintail than Mallard features expressed. The blue bill, vermiculated back, white belly, and slender build are the most obvious Pintail characters, while the green on the head, chestnut breast, and large size are the most strongly represented Mallard features. Hybrids between species of Anatidae have recently been used to trace relationships within the family (e.g. Sage 1966, Beer 1968), hybrid characters foreign to the parents and similar to other species being regarded as indicative of a close relationship between them. Since none of the features of this hybrid fall into that category nothing can be said of phylogenetic significance.

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Taxonomic history of *Schoutedenapus schoutedeni*

by R. K. Brooke

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Unfortunately I (Brooke 1971) did not make clear the taxonomic history of *Schoutedenapus schoutedeni* (Prigogine) 1960: Butokolo in the eastern Congo. I was preoccupied in arguing against White's (1965) view that it was a synonym of *S. myoptilus chapini* (Prigogine) and failed to make it clear that Hall & Moreau (1962), the first authors to discuss it after Prigogine (1960) had published his novelty, had placed it as a fourth race of *S. myoptilus* (Salvadori) and therefore recognized it as a valid taxon. As a result I did not discuss their view having implied that they did not recognize it at all.

The three known specimens of *S. schoutedeni* were collected in the range of *S. m. chapini* in October and November. They are males in non-breeding condition and apparently adults. Prigogine (1966) pointed out that *S. m. chapini* is in breeding condition in February and March and from July to September. Nothing is known of the time or place of breeding of *S. schoutedeni* and it may be that it is allopatric to *S. m. chapini*. Both *S. m. myoptilus* and *chapini* have lengthy north/south montane breeding ranges, particularly the former (Brooke 1971), and it is difficult to imagine which mountain range outside the range of *S. myoptilus* it frequents for breeding. I assume that the three east Congolese specimens are not vagrants from some quite other part of Africa. But even if the breeding range were known and were allopatric to that of